

# Alliance

EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF ALLIED HEALTH SCIENCES

VOL. 19, NO. 1

2010



**Student leaders help set  
direction of college**

**Certificate program  
combats substance abuse**

**Occupational therapists  
evaluate older drivers**





## A message from the dean

I begin my Dean's Message the same way Charles Dickens began his novel, "A Tale of Two Cities:" "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."

In that order, I am proud to say that the College of Allied Health Sciences continues its growth in productivity and excellence despite difficult financial times in higher education. For two years in a row, students in the Department of Physical Therapy and the Department of Physician Assistant Studies (the only state-supported physician assistant studies graduate degree program in the state) achieved a first time 100 percent pass rate on their national certification examinations.

Enrollment of degree-seeking students increased slightly to 796 this year, not including continuing enrollment growth in program minors, certificate programs, prerequisite courses and electives. The number of classes and class attendance in both face-to-face and distance education has also risen compared to last year. The number of external grants that were submitted by CAHS faculty and funded has steadily increased over the last three years.

In August, our director of development and alumni relations, Pat Frede, a Navy reservist, was activated and sent to Afghanistan, where she will be stationed for nearly a year. Before her departure, Pat helped the college raise a record \$1 million in three years providing CAHS with its first endowed professorship and at least one endowed scholarship for every degree granting department. She has our full support and wishes for a safe return.

Dr. Don Ensley, a senior faculty member and one-time chair of the early Department of Community Health retired from the Department of Health Services and Information Management on June 30. Don will continue to serve the college as a member of the advisory committee to the Jean Elaine Mills Health Symposium, which he helped fund through Jean Mills' brother, Amos Mills.

To conclude, I want to share the loss of two people very dear to the college. Meta Downes, who was the long-time director of the undergraduate program and senior faculty member in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, fought a courageous battle with cancer until Feb. 24. Kathy Taft, a graduate of the community health program, passed away in March. She was a member on the State Board of Education. These two wonderful people will be greatly missed.

To all of our alumni and friends, we at the College of Allied Health Sciences hope that your best of times far outnumber your worst of times. Know that we will always strive for excellence in our mission of teaching, research, service, engagement, and clinical practice and will make you proud to be a graduate, friend and supporter.

All the best,



Stephen Thomas, Professor and Dean





EAST  
CAROLINA  
UNIVERSITY

# HEALTH SCIENCES BUILDING

COLLEGE OF NURSING  
COLLEGE OF ALLIED HEALTH SCIENCES



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*On the cover: Bridget Ledford graduated magna cum laude May 7. She worked as a medical technician for four years before deciding to return to school for a higher degree. She plans to enter graduate school and eventually teach.*



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# Finding their voice

## Dr. Laura Ball helps people communicate in different ways

*By Crystal Baity*

Using iPhone software to eye gaze systems, Dr. Laura Ball helps people find their voice.

Ball, an expert in augmentative and alternative communication and motor speech disorders and an associate professor in the Department of Communication and Disorders, works with children and adults who have severe speech and language disorders.

These neurological, developmental and cognitive impairments affect individuals with traumatic brain injury, stroke, cerebral palsy, autism spectrum, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, head and neck cancer, childhood apraxia of speech and genetic syndromes.

Through a small grant, Ball started Voice for All, a community-based clinic for people with complex impairments who can't meet daily needs using their natural speech. East Carolina University specialists do evaluations and offer a broad range of assistive technology for patients to use at home or work to communicate with others. Ball and graduate students evaluated 50 patients from across eastern North Carolina in the first year.

Technology-assisted communication options range in function and price from \$250 to \$15,000 and include pads with picture or symbol buttons

*Dr. Laura Ball works with children and adults in her motion analysis research lab featuring a mural of multi-colored flowers by graduate student Jennifer Lemkes. At right, Dr. Ball works with Linzy Shoaf, a communications sciences and disorders graduate student from Lexington.*

to specialized software for iPhones to high-tech eye gaze systems, similar to the device that the late ECU baseball coach Keith LeClair used during his battle with ALS. The eye gaze system allows someone's eyes to act as a mouse or pointer on a computer screen to talk with others. Devices range from palm-size to tablet size. Some use symbols, others use text, and some have digitized recording or synthesized text-to-speech software, Ball said.

Graduate student Linzy Shoaf of Lexington said Ball asked her students to go to an on-campus café to order a cookie using no speech, only an alternative communication device they created for themselves, so they would

know how difficult it is to create something with enough vocabulary to cover what they want to say and to experience in a very small part what it's like for their patients.

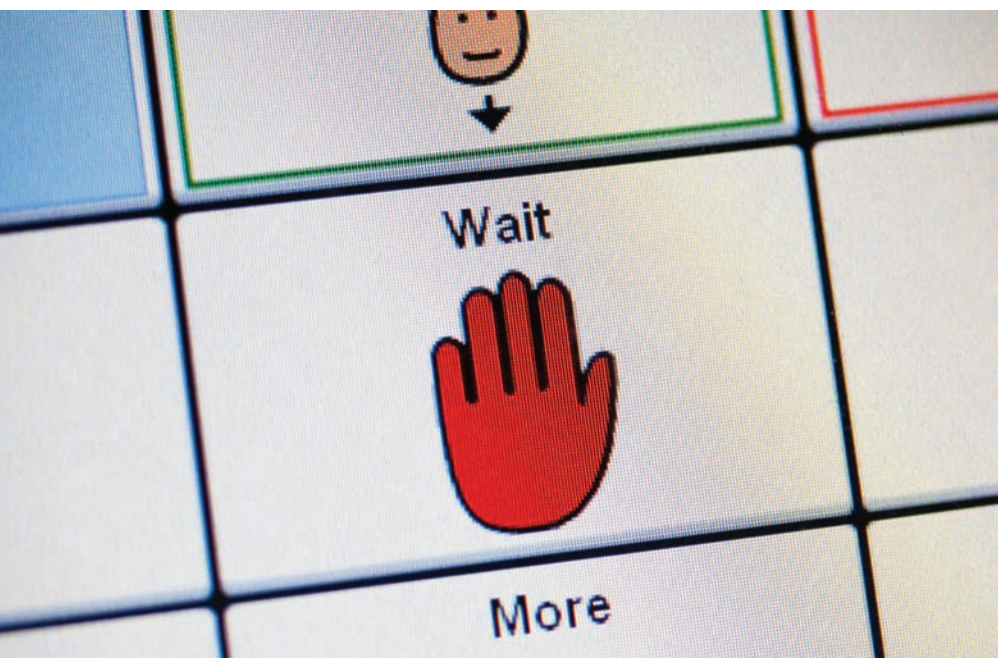
"One of the challenges is that technology is constantly changing," Ball said. "Something else is better, newer, and it is hard to keep up with all of it if you don't do it all the time."

Before these devices were invented, people improvised, often by gesture or some other method known to family and friends, Ball said.

"The technology has really opened up a lot of doors for people with disabilities," Ball said. "My goal is to get people the skills and access to supports they need to communicate."

With the Internet, telecommuting and distance education, some disabilities often go unseen. "It's nice for people to keep doing things as long as possible. It's a way for people to maintain relationships or stay in the workforce, or get into the workforce for the first time," Ball said.





She recalled a patient, a child with cerebral palsy, who came to the ECU clinic for an evaluation. No one knew the child was literate in both Spanish and English, his second language, until he started communicating with a high-tech system. “His body kept him locked in,” she said. “Everyone in the room was in tears because that was something no one who had been working with him realized.”

Soon a device was mounted to his wheelchair that allowed him to communicate in Spanish at home and in English at school, where he is thriving.

In Ball’s research lab, reflective markers placed around a person’s mouth use infrared cameras to measure speed of movement, the trajectory of lip movements during speech, and the amount by which someone opens or closes their lips while speaking.

“Speech is being recorded and motion is being recorded at the same time,” Ball said. “When you’re good with your speech, you’re pretty consistent. When kids or adults have problems, the idea is to figure out, measure and change what is different.”

The range of inconsistency is

telling. “It looks different with different disorders,” Ball said.

Early on, before some patients even notice themselves, changes in facial movements can be evaluated. “We are trying to identify symptoms with speech and swallowing before we can perceive them,” Ball said.

With early intervention, patients can begin medications or clinical trials sooner and possibly slow the progression of disease.

Ball has been working with classroom teachers of students with severe and profound special needs who have complex communication needs. She identifies a baseline for her clients’ communication level without the use of technology, and then measures how their communication changes with technology.

Skye Lewis, a doctoral student and lab assistant from Chapel Hill, said Ball changed her life. She worked for four years as a speech language pathologist before returning to school intending to study another specialty in communication sciences.

“Now I’m specializing in motor speech disorders and augmentative and alternative communication, just like her,”

said Lewis, who supervises all evaluations and seeks funding for the Voice For All clinic.

Dr. Gregg Givens, chairman of the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, searched for three years for someone with Ball’s qualifications before she joined the faculty in 2008. She teaches master’s and doctoral students.

“There is an extreme shortage of people with her expertise. It’s a very focused area,” Givens said. “What Laura brings to the faculty is a nice combination of clinical experience, expertise and research.”

Ball previously worked at the University of Nebraska Medical Center Munroe-Meyer Institute for Rehabilitation and Genetics in Omaha having earned her doctorate from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She received bachelor’s degrees in speech pathology and audiology and foreign languages at West Virginia University and a master’s degree in speech language pathology at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville.

Originally from Athens, W. Va., Ball decided to get closer to home to teach in her field after 15 years in the Midwest. “ECU looked fabulous and it has proven to be,” she said. ☺



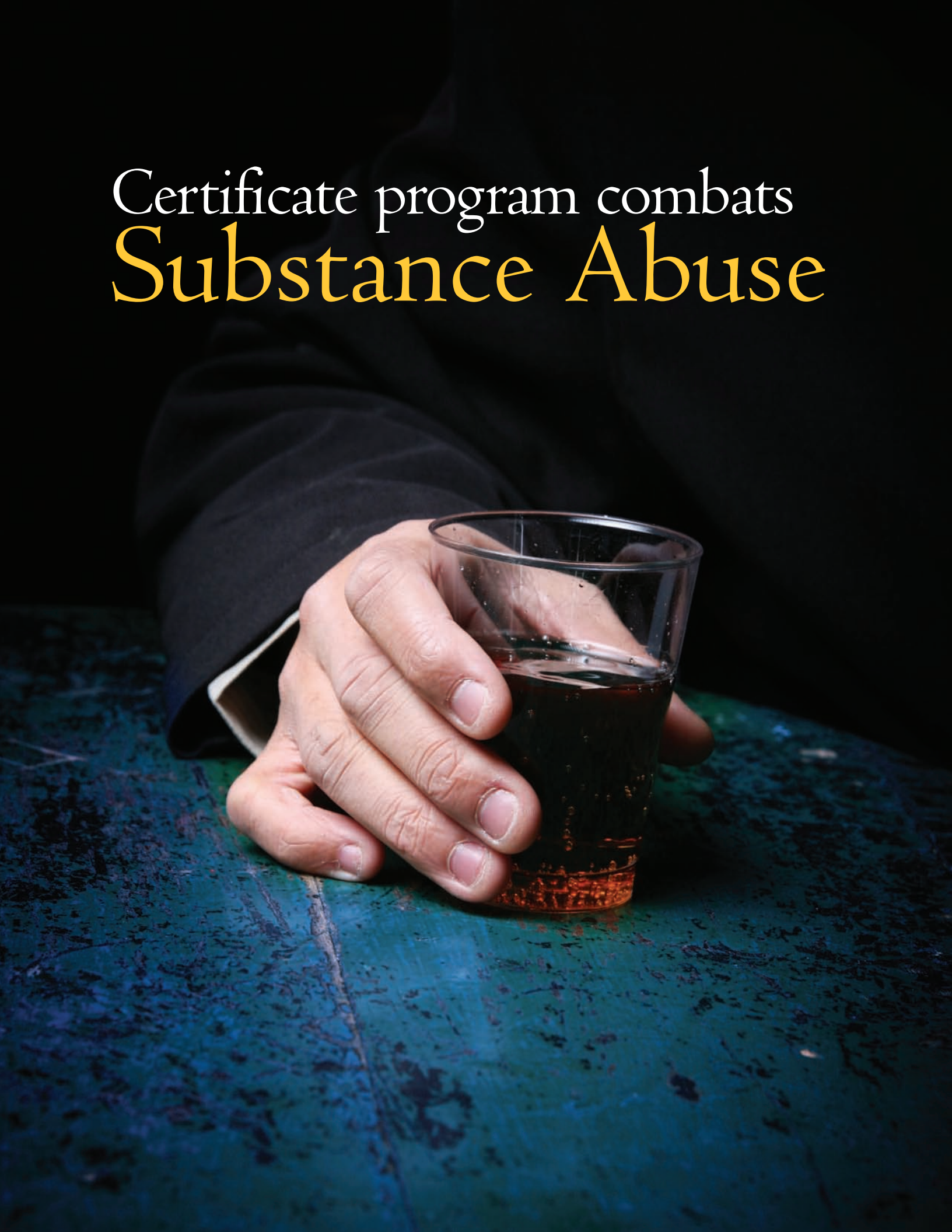
*At left, a computer screen shows an image and word that can be used to communicate. At right, graduate student Linzy Shoaf demonstrates how reflective markers and infrared cameras (shown above) work together to measure movement during speech.*







Certificate program combats  
**Substance Abuse**





*By Karen Shugart*

At the Alamance County middle school where Martina Wells works, she sees a surprising number of students dealing with substance abuse.

Whether it's their own use of drugs or alcohol or their parents' addictions, more families are dealing with such abuse than Wells once thought, and they're dealing with it in an environment where resources can struggle to meet demand.

"It seems like there are not enough substance abuse professionals out there," said Wells, a licensed clinical social worker who's also a part-time student in East Carolina University's substance abuse counseling certificate program.

Demand for substance abuse treatment professionals is growing, whether the need is for counselors at teen-oriented treatment programs, outpatient facilities or on military bases. The U.S. armed forces in particular are in need: Gen. Peter Chiarelli, the Army vice chief of staff, in a Feb. 9 USA Today article said that the Army needs to double its staff of substance abuse counselors to handle the soaring numbers of soldiers seeking alcohol treatment. About 300 more counselors are needed, he told the newspaper.

Even among the civilian population, demand for substance abuse counselors has grown. The federal Bureau of Labor Statistics notes that employment of substance abuse and behavioral health disorder counselors is expected to grow by 21 percent between 2008 and 2018, which is much faster than average for all occupations. The reason, according to the agency, as society becomes more knowledgeable about addiction, more people are seeking treatment. Also, drug offenders are increasingly being sent to treatment rather than to jail.

ECU's Department of Rehabilitation Studies has stepped in to address this need with the substance abuse counseling certificate program. The 12 credit-hour course of study, offered online and on campus, is aimed at a wide range



*Dr. Mary Crozier, assistant professor and coordinator of the substance abuse counseling certificate program, facilitates discussions and posts videos for students to watch online at home.*

of potential students, whether they be experienced mental health workers hoping to widen their skills or recent graduates who want to inch their way into a master's program. It is the only program in the UNC system that offers all substance abuse counseling certificate courses online.

The certificate program offers students exposure to substance abuse treatment and prevention methods. The online courses give students a chance to enroll regardless of where they work. The flexibility helps students juggle work and family responsibilities, while giving them skills needed to work in substance abuse treatment. "That it was online really made it more enticing for me," said Wells, who lives in Creedmoor, about 100 miles west of Greenville.

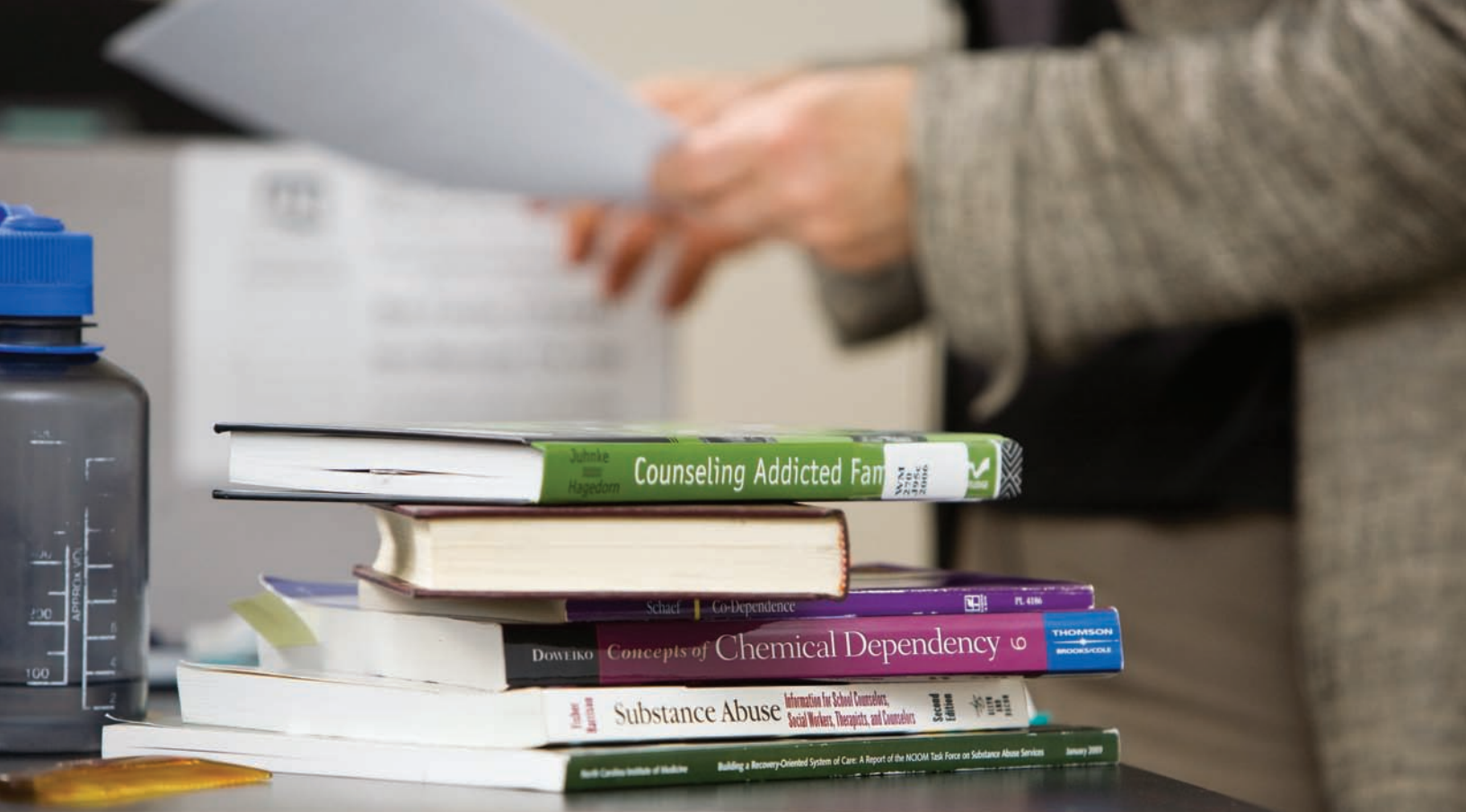
The courses feature online lectures from Dr. Mary Crozier, assistant professor and coordinator of the program, and other instructors, who also

facilitate discussions and post videos for students to watch at home. "These are two-hour videos with the guru of substance abuse [counseling] interviewing patients," Crozier said. "They get to hear the thoughts of federal movers and shakers."

Discussion board exchanges can get lively. "They say, 'I never thought of trying that strategy' and 'How do you think it would work with my client?' 'Well, I don't know, but the client and the counselor in my practice tried this and here is how it worked,'" Crozier recalled. "They encourage each other. They coach each other."

The students come from diverse backgrounds and bring disparate skills to the courses. "If you're a police officer or a juvenile worker, a social worker or a dentist, you're going to have a different set of [experiences,]" said Dr. Lloyd Goodwin, professor and interim chair of rehabilitation studies,





who championed the program's creation four years ago.

The program grew out of demand. Providers were clamoring for more staff trained on these issues. Though the rehabilitation studies department already offered a minor in alcohol and drug studies, as well as master's degree in substance abuse and clinical counseling, department officials wanted something that would allow working professionals to get training and expose students to the field.

"This is a way that ECU can branch out, offer courses to a whole new consumer group, basically those who might not have the time or money to get a degree such as a master's degree," Crozier said.

Clayton Sessoms, director of the Division of Continuing Studies, said certificates for years have been an avenue for ECU's goals of access, accommodation and outreach. Technology has expanded the university's reach. "The advent of the online graduate certificate is something that is more than a decade old," Sessoms said.

Fifty-four students are now in the program, quick growth for a certificate

that was first offered four years ago.

"I'm as busy as I can be," Crozier said.

For one course, students have to give up an addiction, vice or crutch, such as smoking, diet soda, fast food or depression-driven late-night TV viewing. The students record their experiences, including relapses, and their feelings. "Addictions to work, exercise, food — behavior addictions — are very similar to substance addictions," she said.


A contemporary issues course invites students to discuss the big questions in the field: Should pregnant addicts be given services? Are needle exchange programs a good idea?

Roosevelt Harp, a student in the program, helped soldiers address their substance-abuse problems when he was in the Army. Now retired, Harp is a guidance counselor at Fort Bragg's Soldier and Family Assistance Center, where he helps wounded warriors and their families plan education goals. His clients occasionally confide in him about alcohol and prescription pill abuse. The certificate program has helped him learn about resources and referrals he can recommend, said Harp, who lives in Fayetteville.

The students' endeavors are paying off in the tight job market. Graduates of substance-abuse counseling programs are finding work, Crozier said. Financial stress can be a factor in substance abuse, as some people turn to drugs and alcohol abuse during hard times. That may partly explain why, even in a dismal economy, many employers are hiring. "There are a lot of clients, and there seems to be enough funding for hiring staff," Crozier said.

Harp, now a civilian, wants the certification so he can land one of the many substance-abuse counseling positions advertised on the Army's civilian employment website. "I think I'd be an asset," Harp said. "There is a need."

That need is being recognized. Not long ago, in Alamance County where Wells works, one agency finally began offering a service that had previously been unavailable locally: substance-abuse assessment and counseling for adolescents.

"There's such a need for it," said Wells, who hopes to segue from a school to private practice. "It's a serious problem in our country." 

To learn more about the rehabilitation studies program, visit [www.ecu.edu/rebb/](http://www.ecu.edu/rebb/).





# I am an ECU allied health sciences student

**Applied for undergraduate admission:** 258

**Admitted to undergraduate programs:** 162

**Average GPA** of those admitted into undergraduate programs: 3.05

**Applied for graduation admission:** 976

**Admitted for graduate programs:** 167

**Average GPA** of those admitted to the graduate programs: 3.47

**Total number of students enrolled in allied health sciences degree and certificate programs in fall 2009:** 821

**Female students:** 680

**Male students:** 141

**White students:** 629

**Non-white students:** 192

**Full-time students:** 661

**Part-time students:** 160

**In-state students:** 731

**Out-of-state students:** 90

**Other important statistics:**

The following are departmental enrollments for the 2009-2010 calendar year.  
Clinical Laboratory Science: 26; Communication Sciences and Disorders: 166;  
Health Services and Information Management: 220; Occupational Therapy: 60;  
Physical Therapy: 87; Physician Assistant Studies: 97; Rehabilitation Studies: 115;  
Graduate Certificate programs: 50





Regulatory and  
Caution  
Signs for  
Special





# Behind the wheel

New courses, grants help mobilize evaluation and care of older drivers

*By Crystal Baity*

Most anyone will tell you one of the toughest choices they've faced is when their elderly parent or grandparent should stop driving.

At East Carolina University, the Department of Occupational Therapy is leading research into older drivers and the development of new programs and initiatives for North Carolinians facing those difficult decisions.

In 2009, State Farm Insurance awarded a \$15,000 Good Neighbor Citizenship Grant to ECU for an online course designed for occupational therapists who want to become trained as driver rehabilitation specialists or those who work with older adults and need to address driving with clients. This is the second State Farm grant in as many years for ECU.

The course, featuring animation, video and audio, will debut this summer. "If someone has had a stroke, they often ask, 'can I drive?' Very often it's an acute thing and the answer is obvious. But other times it's not," said Dr. Anne Dickerson, professor of occupational therapy and director of Research for the Older Adult Driver Initiative or ROADI at ECU. Dickerson is a licensed occupational

therapist and driver rehabilitation specialist who wrote the grant and developed the course.

"Clearly there is a great need for more occupational therapists with knowledge of driving screenings, evaluations and when to refer to specialists to do behind-the-wheel assessments," Dickerson said. "With the advent of the baby boomers and the need to conduct more assessment of driving with at-risk drivers, the need for qualified professionals is rapidly increasing."

Occupational therapists with driving rehabilitation credentials are in high demand. There are only 500 to 600 certified in the United States, Dickerson said.

*Dr. Anne Dickerson displays a large print regulatory and control signs booklet developed for North Carolina's Division of Motor Vehicles to assist older drivers.*



"If someone wants to learn more about how to address driving with their clients in therapy or learn about become a driving rehabilitation specialist, this is the first course," Dickerson said.

Using virtual reality applications, students can hear and see lifelike instrument panels on a dashboard or experience a simulated drive on a street. Basic safety instructions from setting a parking break to properly changing lane positions are covered.

Two more courses are under development that will assist occupation therapy general practitioners transitioning to the driver rehabilitation role. Content will include clinical and behind-the-wheel evaluations as well as training and rehabilitation of drivers.

Increasing awareness about the safety of older drivers is a focus of ROADI, which Dickerson started in 2003 to provide driving evaluation, training and rehabilitation. The purpose is to help older drivers retain their freedom, independence and keep or return them safely to the road. Occupational therapy graduate students also get valuable clinical and research experience through the initiative. 📺

## Video Link 📺

Visit [www.youtube.com/ecu](http://www.youtube.com/ecu) to watch a sample of the driving rehabilitation specialist course content.



# New tools help measure driving skills

By Crystal Baity

East Carolina University, through a partnership with a statewide coalition, has developed several tools for law enforcement officers and physicians to assess older drivers' ability to safely stay on the road.

Dr. Anne Dickerson, professor of occupational therapy, is a member of the North Carolina Senior Driver Coalition. About a year ago, the group received a \$5,000 grant from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which is being used for needs specific to older drivers.

Working with North Carolina's Division of Motor Vehicles Medical Review Department and in conjunction with Dickerson at ECU, the coalition developed a large print regulatory and control signs booklet as an alternative to the binocular-like testing device found in DMV offices.

The medical review department handles all drivers who may have a mental or physical disability that could impair their ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. The department is managed by Susan Stewart, who serves with Dickerson on the coalition.

The booklets have been distributed to all 114 drivers' licenses offices across the state, and examiners use the signs two or three times a week, Stewart said.

"The signs are very important to the driver license examiners in their daily work," Stewart said. "The chart allows a driver who for whatever reason can not view the signs via the DL tester a chance to show they know the signs."

Another aid developed at ECU through the coalition in conjunction with the N.C. Highway Patrol is a laminated "cue card" with prompts for officers who are approached by older drivers asking for assistance or stopped for a potential traffic violation. The information will assist officers in assessing the continued safe operational needs of the older motorist.

Some questions or cues include the following: Does the driver know the time, day, month or year? Does the driver know his or her destination? Does the driver have trouble finding and producing appropriate identification? The cards are being tested by officers during a pilot phase.

If officers determine a driver is at risk, they can make a medical review referral for a driver re-examination, recommend self restriction from certain kinds of driving or ask the driver to contact a family member.

Lastly, the grant was used to develop a digital resource guide for physicians who might need to assess their patients' ability to continue driving.

"Older people don't want to give up driving so they don't mention it because they don't want the answer," Dickerson said.

Research shows that men will outlive their ability to drive by six years and women 10 years. Also, older adults depend on their physician to alert them to changes in their abilities, including those that are critical for driving.

Along with the digital resource guide, Dickerson is providing brief in-service training for physicians' offices. The guide also will be included on the website at [www.ROADI.org](http://www.ROADI.org). 📺



# A vision for better health

By Crystal Baity

Alumna Jean Mills' vision to bring more attention to the health of the community at large, especially African-Americans, is reaching more people every year.

Ten years after her death, the annual Jean Elaine Mills Health Symposium had almost 150 attendees, a record number for the series that first began in 2005.

The event, held annually during Black History Month, brings nationally known speakers to discuss critical health care issues facing minority populations and seek solutions to those problems.

"The idea is to address issues of diversity, health disparities and health inequities in rural areas and to shed light on those inequities with a community focus and research focus," said Dr. Stephen Thomas, dean of the College of Allied Health Sciences.

Experts including allied health, social epidemiologists and health policy analysts have shared their research, ranging from diabetes, obesity or the lack of public services in traditional black neighborhoods to the importance of progressive social and economic policies in improving the health of vulnerable populations.

The event is the only one of its kind aimed at improving residents' quality of life and especially the health of African-Americans and Latinos in eastern North Carolina.

Ensley was Mills' professor and worked closely with her brother, attorney Amos T. Mills III of Fuquay-Varina, who donated \$25,000 to the ECU Medical & Health Sciences Foundation to endow the symposium. Ensley will retire June 30 but will remain on the

planning committee, which includes Mills and other community members.

"My dream is to grow it," Mills said.

He envisions a residential center near ECU to treat obesity, where people would live two weeks or more and focus on healthier shopping, eating and exercise habits and incorporate holistic treatments for the rest of their lives.

"When eastern North Carolina was an agrarian community, people ate cheap cuts of meat and used a lot of seasoning to increase the taste of food. Most people fried all their food with grease because that was the custom," Mills said.

People worked from daybreak to sunset on farms, and high blood pressure and diabetes weren't as prevalent. When people moved into more sedentary jobs, they kept the same diet. Obesity, heart disease and diabetes became a rising problem in the minority population in eastern North Carolina in disproportionate numbers compared to other areas in the state. Nationwide, first lady Michelle Obama has launched a campaign to solve the childhood obesity epidemic within a generation.

"This type of food we eat is killing us," Mills said. "Change is hard. Boiled and baked is not what we grew up with. We have to change our brains. It is a mindset."

Health disparities also lead to bigger community problems. Studies have shown corporations are less likely to relocate to areas where potential workers are obese or sickly. "When people are unhealthy, they may miss work more often or have trouble getting or keeping a job," Mills said.

Ensley said the symposium provides an opportunity to merge the models of community, service and practice at ECU.



## Jean Mills


*earned her bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1977 and a master's in public administration with a concentration in community health from ECU in 1984. She died of breast cancer in October 2000.*

"Clearly, community engagement is an important element in the planning of the symposium," he said. "We need to continue to seek additional resources, identify professional presenters and encourage stronger participation by the colleges, departments and faculty."

Integrating topics into the university's curricula and tapping underutilized community resources are important, Ensley said.

The symposium started with about 90 participants and has grown to a must-attend event each year. "It was important then, and it remains important now," Thomas said.

"One thing we want to do is look at the impact we're having on the community. What are we doing to change behaviors?" he said.

Organizers also want to develop long-lasting relationships with presenters to link community members, resources and researchers. 

*The symposium is sponsored by the College of Allied Health Sciences in collaboration with the ECU Medical and Health Sciences Foundation, Pitt Memorial Hospital Foundation and the Eastern Area Health Education Center. Past symposiums are at [www.ecu.edu/ah](http://www.ecu.edu/ah).*





# Pirate speech camp

## helps children improve communication skills

By Crystal Baity

Little boys run under a huge color wheel parachute as Pirate Speech Camp Director Julia Morrow holds up several stuffed animals.

"Shall we see if we can make the dinosaurs fly off?" asks Morrow. "Yes," the children yell as she tosses the animals on the tarp. The 10 boys line themselves around the edge of the parachute, pumping their arms to fling the dinosaurs to the floor.

Last summer, East Carolina University offered the five-week camp in space provided by St. Paul's Episcopal Church in downtown Greenville. The camp provides a fun, intensive therapeutic environment to improve the communication skills of children with severe expressive language deficits including autism, said Morrow, coordinator of external clinical education in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders.

Counselors are first-year communication sciences and disorders graduate students in the College of Allied Health Sciences. Morrow also is assisted by Lori Kincannon, a speech language pathologist in the Pitt County Schools.

The camp was originally designed to help children maintain skills during the summer when school is out. "But we've had lots of parents telling us they see lots of growth in their children," Morrow said.

The children are able to have fun, do arts and crafts, play on the playground, and are encouraged to interact and socialize with other children as much as possible, all while working on language skills outside a typical clinical environment, said counselor Taylor Chewing of Wilmington. Another positive outcome has been working

collaboratively with other student counselors and learning from each other. "A lot of times you're by yourself in clinic," Chewing said. "Here at camp, we're all together with one goal of helping these kids learn as much as possible."

Camp time is finely structured with a set daily routine to provide group language activities, fine motor craft activities and gross motor activities like the parachute or indoor baseball. "The whole point is to work together," said counselor Karyn Morrone of Sapphire.

During story time, all are at the table, watching as the teacher turns the pages of the book and raising their hand to answer questions.

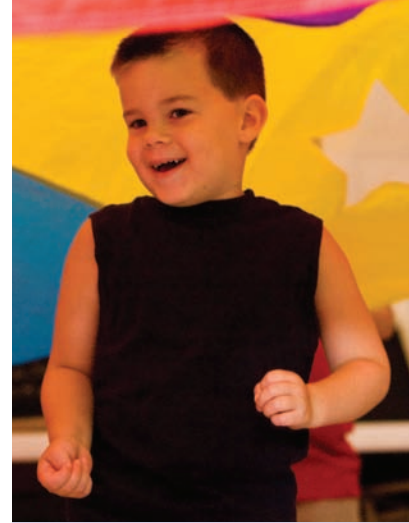
"We will not allow the children to sit in the corner and withdraw or engage in repetitive behaviors," Morrow said. "They naturally don't want to be engaged, and we are prompting and facilitating changes in behavior."

Counselor Kimberly Woolard served as teacher during the week themed "The Five Senses." The counselors take turns as lead teacher and in individual activities.

"It has been a wonderful experience working at the camp, an experience that will definitely be helpful in the future. I have learned a lot about autism spectrum disorder and how to best work with those who have it, and I'm sure that this won't be the last time these skills are used," said Woolard, who is originally from Washington.

Morrow said the camp is expanding this summer to accommodate 16 children in two groups, one for ages 4-7 and another for children aged 7-10. Another speech language pathologist will be added to assist. 🐙

*Karyn Marrone, a recent ECU graduate in communications and sciences disorders, works with a child during the summer speech camp.*



## Working to support autism services

Autism is a leading developmental disability in eastern North Carolina and the nation. It is estimated as many as one child in every 150 births may be affected by this condition. Families of children with autism often find themselves isolated and overwhelmed. Services are needed to properly diagnose and treat communication disorders related to autism spectrum disorders.

Recognizing this important need, ECU's Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders is working to establish more services for children with autism.

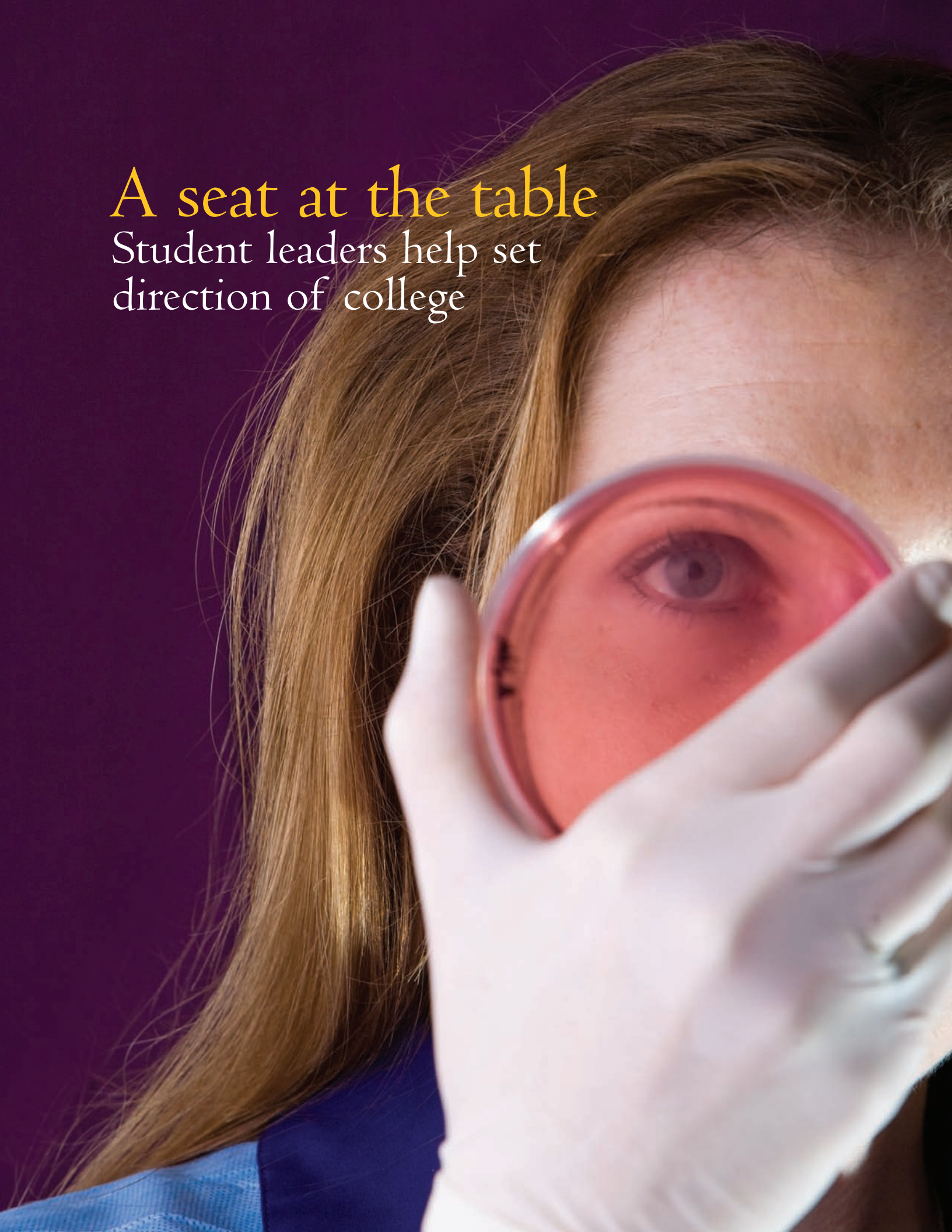
Pirate Speech Camp has been a highlight for children with significant language and developmental disorders for the past two years. Last year, 10 children participated. This year, the camp will expand to 16 children. With additional resources, more children and their families can be helped.

If you would like to support the growth of services for those with autism, send your tax-deductible contribution to the ECU Medical & Health Sciences Foundation, 525 Moye Blvd., Greenville, N.C., 27834. Note "autism" in the memo line of the check. If you would like to donate by credit card or for more information, contact Carole Novick, president of the ECU Medical & Health Sciences Foundation, at 252-744-2238. 🐙



# A seat at the table

Student leaders help set  
direction of college





*By Crystal Baity*

Being a health care administrator is Deidre Nixon's dream job. Bridget Ledford is going to graduate school with plans to eventually teach budding scientists. And Jamie Joyner is leaning toward work in rehabilitation as an occupational therapist.

All have gained valuable experience for their career goals by serving on the Student Leaders Council in the College of Allied Health Sciences. It's the first student group of its kind at East Carolina University.

The council began in 2007 and includes two representatives from each of the college's degree-granting departments who meet monthly, plan leadership activities and serve as liaisons between almost 800 students and about 100 faculty and staff members.

"We're trying to increase leadership opportunities in allied health with all students in mind," said Dr. Beth Velde, assistant dean of the college and council adviser.

In a college as diverse as allied health sciences, from majors with direct patient care to those who work behind the scenes, the council unifies students and addresses common goals.

"It is a way of bringing students together to feel a sense of camaraderie," said Dr. Stephen Thomas, dean of allied health sciences. "Allied health professionals work together as a team. In that process, some work together more often than others. They need to know the roles all these people play, their importance and how it all fits together."

In the past two years, the council has organized events such as annual leadership conferences with Robert J. Greczyn Jr., retired CEO of Blue



Cross Blue Shield and an ECU alumnus who serves on the university's board of trustees, and Alisa Evans Debnam, executive director of the Council for Allied Health in North Carolina and an ECU alumna.

One of the council's first projects was to survey students about allied health's part of the Health Sciences Building. They found that the building, while one of the newest on campus, needed more spots for people to meet outside of class. The result: additional chairs, loveseats and tables in common areas. "Students were able to make a difference in the college," Velde said.

A current survey is gauging diversity in the college. "What started as a student organization that looked at practical concerns is moving on to more

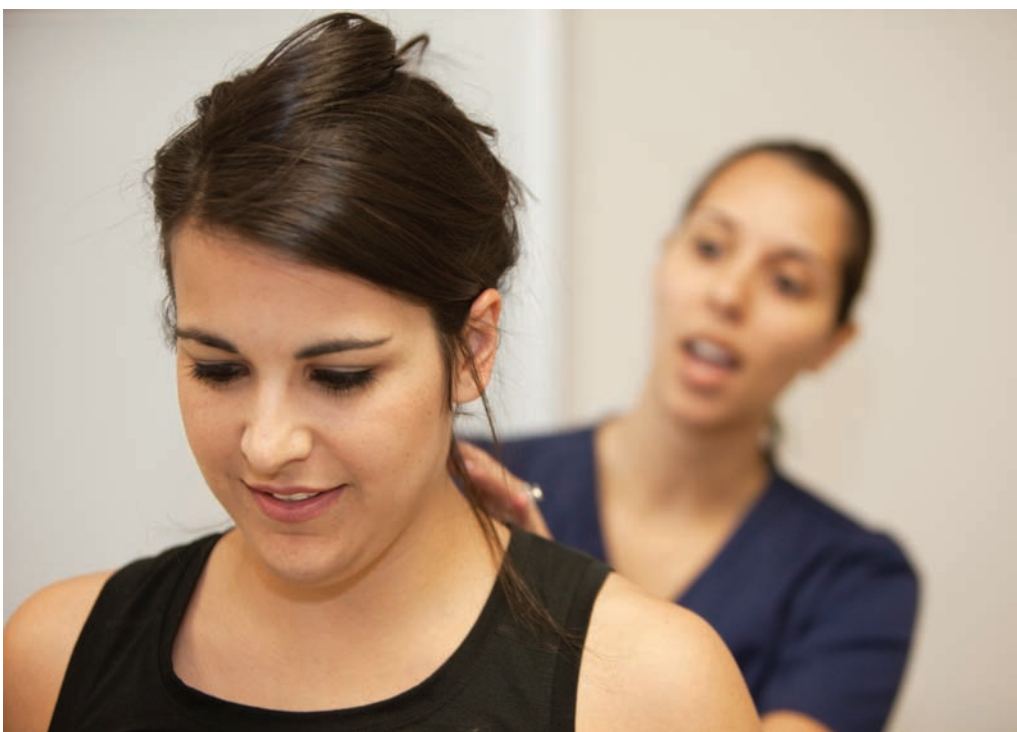


difficult issues," Velde said. "The college couldn't have made that move without the trust and confidence between students, faculty and administrators."

The council also provides much-needed hands-on support for alumni gatherings during homecoming and developed a student resources guide. Plans for fall include a possible lunch-and-learn meeting featuring a case study or a seminar on health care reform.

As the dean's office liaison, Nixon serves as chair of the council. She works 10 hours a week, receives a small stipend and meets regularly with Velde.

"We're going to serve as leaders," said Nixon, 22, a health information management graduate from Edenton. "Any kind of training in college is great to have."



*At left, Bridget Ledford holds a petri dish in the lab. At right, physician assistant studies graduate student Miranda Isom evaluates fellow student Emily Bellis.*





*In the photo at left, Deidre Nixon, right, met regularly during the academic year with Dr. Beth Velde, advisor to the Student Leaders Council. At right, communication sciences and disorders graduate student Lauren Everett works with an aphasia support group participant.*

## CAMPUS PRIORITY

An East Carolina University Tomorrow initiative, leadership is a hot topic. Chancellor Steve Ballard has called for ECU to be the leadership university in the UNC system by distinguishing itself in its ability to train and prepare leaders for the state and nation.

That strategic direction has buoyed the college's efforts. So has a \$20,000 grant awarded in January by the BB&T Leadership Enhancement Fund, which supports leadership initiatives in ECU's academic units. The grant will be used to build on the culture of leadership that already exists in allied health.

"We do leadership, but we don't always use the language of leadership," Velde said. "We need to use the term more consistently so people will recognize leadership in the College of Allied Health Sciences."

Goals and activities for the grant were determined by input from the Student Leaders Council and student organizations, departmental faculty meetings, and departmental chair meetings with the dean, his administration and staff.

Objectives include forging a leadership collaborative among everyone in the college; enhancing the leadership voice of students and faculty; providing faculty professional development regarding curriculum enhancement, course design and student extracurricular opportunities centered on leadership; and changing the way the college displays and uses cultural artifacts and language to define leadership as a key cultural focus.

Mentoring is a big part of the plan. Establishing relationships between faculty and students will help identify leadership abilities, traits and skills and will include a mentoring conference for advisers and officers in student organizations.

Two faculty consultants within the college, Dr. Kathy Cox, associate professor of communication sciences and disorders, and Annette Jones, occupational therapy instructor, have been appointed to update Web and syllabus materials to weave leadership development content into the language of the college to help students and faculty recognize that it is an integral

part of their professional career. A leadership section will be created on the website to provide links to resources and a self-paced leadership training module for students.

"Through an influx of resources, faculty will be involved in a culture shift that will infuse their classrooms with newfound knowledge and best leadership practices," the grant summary said.

"The hope is by the end of next fall, student organizations will have a lot of choices of activities in leadership," Velde said. "We want to develop activities that, once developed, will be self-sustaining."

Awareness about opportunities for students to become involved in leadership has blossomed under the chancellor's directive and the college's initiative.

"By learning leadership and having leadership opportunities as a student, I feel we will be better prepared to step into leadership positions after graduation," said Ledford, 27, who is from Corydon, Ind. Ledford graduated magna cum laude May 7. She worked as a medical laboratory technician for four years before deciding to return to school for a higher degree.

"When you get out in the field, you will be a leader and you will be working with physical therapists or speech language pathologists or other professionals," said Joyner, an occupational therapy graduate student from Lewisville. "We're the voice of the patient and the client, and we need to be a leader."

Joyner, who has a bachelor's degree in health services management, is working with injured Camp Lejeune Marines on timing and rhythm with a neurological-motor assessment tool called the Interactive Metronome.



## LEADERS BY EXAMPLE

Alumni and faculty have been very supportive of the leadership-building efforts, Velde said.

One of the biggest supporters has been Dr. Stephen Thomas. He has included the Student Leaders Council in his yearly budget and listens intently to student concerns.

"I have always felt that we're here for the students. They are here for an education to learn and leave as better citizens and professionals so we need to listen to them," Thomas said.

Delivering quality patient-centered health care requires leadership skills in the classroom and clinical environment. "We're doing leadership yet we're not calling it leadership," Thomas said.

"Our mission is to educate the best health care professionals we possibly can so they can create positive change where ever they're employed," Thomas said. "You don't have to be a CEO or administrator to be a leader."

Nixon graduated May 7, and will enter graduate school for a master's of business administration degree in health care management. In addition to chairing the Student Leaders Council, she helped co-found Voices for Victims, a campus support group for women who have been sexually assaulted or raped. She serves as a peer educator.

Serving in leadership roles has helped Nixon better recognize her strengths and weaknesses. She believes more students will discover their own potential for leadership under the university and college's increased focus.

"I believe leaders can be developed," she said. "I believe more leaders will be discovered." 🗣️



**The Student Leaders Council,** established in 2007, is made up of two students from each degree-granting department in the College of Allied Health Sciences.

## 2009-2010 STUDENT LEADERS COUNCIL

- **DEIDRE NIXON**, Student liaison to the dean's office and chair of the Student Leaders Council
- **JESSICA STYERS**, Clinical laboratory science
- **BRIDGET LEDFORD**, Clinical laboratory science
- **COURTNEY DURHAM**, Communication sciences and disorders
- **COURTNEY JACKSON**, Communication sciences and disorders
- **KYLE LECUYER**, Health information management
- **CHELSE KLEIN**, Health services management
- **CHELSEA KAPP**, Occupational therapy
- **JAMIE JOYNER**, Occupational therapy
- **CHERYL HUANG**, Physician assistant studies
- **DAVID BUFF**, Physician assistant studies
- **RYAN BOLENA**, Physical therapy
- **DAVID STALLINGS**, Physical therapy
- **COLLEEN MESEROLL**, Rehabilitation studies

Front row, left to right: Jessica Styers, Courtney Jackson, Courtney Durham, Deidre Nixon, Chelsea Klein, Bridget Ledford, Chelsea Kapp, and Jamie Joyner. Back row, left to right: Ryan Bolena and David Buff.



# Developing a country

## Frede brings fundraising skills to nation-building



By Karen Shugart

University fundraising and counterinsurgency may not sound like they have much in common, but Pat Frede is proving otherwise.

Since her January 2007 hire as director of development for the College of Allied Health Sciences, Frede has built her success on developing relationships and fostering goodwill, skills that

have netted over a million dollars.

In Afghanistan, those skills help build democracy, stabilize the country and even save lives.

"Relationship-building skills are critical," Frede wrote from Camp Julien, just 10 miles on the outskirts of Kabul, where she's the non-commissioned officer in charge and senior enlisted leader for the support staff of the Counterinsurgency Training Center-Afghanistan. "In development, we seek out prospects that have a connection to us, a desire to help and the capacity to impact the cause.

"Here, everyone is a prospect," she continued. "Most people want to help, and the only capacity required is cooperation and trust."

Frede, a Navy veteran and reservist, is among service members tasked with logistic support of Camp Julien, a duty that includes conducting convoy operations for transportation and resupply, and even providing fire and security protection.

Frede arrived at Camp Julien in November, nine months after learning she was being called to active duty. After graduating from training at Fort Polk, La., as a certified Foreign Security Forces Combat Advisor, she headed overseas with other members of the U.S. Navy team assigned to the CTC-Afghanistan.

She's had some exciting assignments and met interesting people, including Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, the commander of U.S. Forces in

*At left, Pat Frede, reservist and director of development in the College of Allied Health Sciences, shares her Pirate spirit with Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal. Above right, Frede enjoys a meal with colleagues in an Afghan home. At right, the picturesque landscape provides a remarkable contrast to the ongoing war in Afghanistan. (Editor's note: At press time, McChrystal resigned as the commander of U.S. Forces in Afghanistan).*

Afghanistan and the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force. McChrystal told Frede they would have to speak again; his wife, Anne is an ECU alumna. She received a master of arts in education in 1980, with a concentration in counselor education. "Being the admired leader that he is, he was more than happy to take a moment and pose for a photo," Frede said.

Frede also has trained in the Helmand province in southwest Afghanistan with U.S. Marine Corps Female Engagement Teams. These female service members try to build relationships with Afghan women, who generally aren't allowed to have contact with men outside their families. "Although they are viewed as not having much influence outside the home, they have tremendous influence inside the home," Frede said.

Frede has visited Afghans' homes, including that of a young man who works with her and her colleagues. The employee invited several service members to celebrate the Afghan New Year in March with his family. While the men were not allowed to meet their

employee's mother, Frede was, and the woman presented her with a beautiful jade ring. "Afghans are incredibly hospitable, and visitors are treated as honored guests," she said.

Many Americans would be surprised by the extent of poverty in Afghanistan, Frede said, citing sobering statistics: "Drinking water comes mostly from shallow hand-pump wells (we use bottled water for everything except showers), many areas have no electricity, and there is no sewer system. Fewer than 15 percent of people can both read and write. Life expectancy is 43.1 years. One-in-six children die at birth. Ninety percent of the world's opium comes from southern Afghanistan."

Movement outside Camp Julien is limited to mission-essential convoys,

and then it's in up-armored SUVs while wearing body armor and armed with a 9 mm pistol and an M-4 rifle. Conditions inside the camp, however, offer some respite. One of only three women on staff, Frede has her own 7-by-10-foot room, just 100 feet from her office. Both home and office are in small buildings known as B-huts, semi-permanent wooden structures often used in Afghanistan as replacements for tents. Said Frede: "It beats the heck out of a tent!"

Frede is scheduled to come home in September, and her colleagues in Greenville will be waiting. "We greatly miss her," said Carole Novick, president of the ECU Medical & Health Sciences Foundation. "We certainly appreciate the work she's doing in Afghanistan." 🇦🇫







*Dr. Andrew Stuart coaches his team  
to be better players through discipline,  
motivation and patience.*



# Top assist

## Andrew Stuart coaches volleyball teens to find their strong side

By Karen Shugart

A skilled coach takes on many roles: taskmaster, motivational speaker and therapist, among others. Add young teenagers to the roster, and the balancing act can be even harder.

It's a balancing act that Dr. Andrew Stuart appreciates. A former college volleyball player and coach whose experience in the game has spanned almost four decades, Stuart is founder of the Coastal Plain Volleyball Club.

Stuart, a professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, has coached a variety of age groups and abilities. This season he's coaching his youngest yet — 11 girls, ages 12 and 13. "It's been fun and a challenge," he said.

The challenge, it appears, has paid off: Within months of beginning practice, the team won a state championship. The players learned quickly to come together, Stuart said. "When they win, it's rewarding for them, and it's rewarding to see how they can meet goals when they work hard and they're disciplined."

Such traits were characteristics that Stuart developed himself growing up in New Brunswick, Canada. He developed a passion for the sport so closely associated with his country, but as high school rolled around saw that his future in hockey might be limited. "The boys were getting bigger and the hits were getting harder," he said.

So he set his sights on the other sport he loved, volleyball. "It is one sport that demands the athlete have a balance between strength, endurance, and quickness," he said. "The little

player is often better than the bigger player. It also is a game that demands a lot of mental preparation and study of the game — smart players excel."

His skill landed him spots on the Dalhousie University volleyball team in Nova Scotia. In the years after college, he played and coached at Dalhousie and other places, including teams in Greenville.

It wasn't until two years ago, however, that several parents approached him to coach their children. What was intended to be one team grew into the eight-team Coastal Plain Volleyball Club. "Our club and our philosophy is to be as inclusive as we can be and to find a place for kids to play no matter what skill level they are," Stuart said.

Stuart, known as "Coach Andy," to his players, sees the club as a way to keep teenagers busy in positive activities and to provide physical activity. Some parents, such as Dr. Sherri Jones, say the club has provided their daughters with other benefits as well.

Jones said her daughter's self-esteem — and her volleyball skills — has improved as she's learned not to be so

hard on herself. "Andy's been really good about explaining to the whole team that everybody makes mistakes," said Jones, an associate professor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders. "We don't dwell on our mistakes. We need to deal with them and move on."

"He's very disciplined, and he expects discipline," she added.

Stuart's patience was on display at a recent practice. "Cameron, where are you supposed to be?" he quizzed one player.

"Over there," a voice said quietly.

"And where are you?"

"Over here."

"OK, everybody, listen up, you've got to move when the ball is hit! Let's do it again."

And so it goes during the two, sometimes three, weekly practices that began in November and ended in May. It's hard work, for sure, but it has paid off: Only two months after the team failed to even advance out of pool play in its first tournament, the team won the Carolina Regional Volleyball Association Junior Girls 13 Gold State Championship on March 20.

"It was very rewarding and fun to watch the players respond over the course of the season," Stuart said. "We went from just getting the ball over the net to more advanced individual skills and a team commitment to an offensive and defensive system." 🏐

*(This story first appeared in the April 30 edition of Pieces of Eight, the ECU faculty and staff online newsletter.)*









# Diligent determination

## Janelle Lucksavage overcomes challenges in becoming physical therapist

*By Crystal Baity*

Becoming a physical therapist and raising two young children, with a third on the way, all while her husband has been stationed with the U.S. Army several hundred miles away could be described as overwhelming.

But Janelle Lucksavage, who received her doctoral degree May 7, has thrived under the challenges.

"Her tenacity and diligence in overcoming all the issues she's had are a great example of what can be done with determination," said Dr. Walt Jenkins, interim chairman of the Department of Physical Therapy at East Carolina University.

She has been married 10 years to Phil Lucksavage, a medical lab technician and career active duty officer. They've known each other since seventh grade where they grew up in Asheville. The couple has two children, Zoie, 7, and Zane, 6, with another due in June. Phil Lucksavage has been stationed in Philadelphia for more than a year, but was actually deployed to Iraq for 16 months when she first came to ECU.

"It's obvious her time has been limited to spend with us, which means she has had to spend extra time on material when her children are in bed to devote to our curriculum," Jenkins said. "She's never been late. She's never been absent. She's never used her family

as an excuse for anything. She's always delivered what she was supposed to."

Physical therapy is a three-year, 106-semester-hour program that includes 32 weeks of clinical education. Students are in class 30 hours a week and they must spend an equal amount or more outside of class on group projects, preparation or research. The highly competitive program only accepts 30 students each year.

"Returning to school full-time with two young kids and alone was a big challenge, and harder than I thought it would be," Janelle Lucksavage said. "I had to re-learn to study and schedule my time."

Janelle Lucksavage graduated from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington in 2001 with a bachelor's degree in sociology, and soon began working as a civilian at the military's Center for Health Promotion and Preventative Medicine in Maryland, where her husband was stationed at the time. "They have all disciplines working together to study the health and wellness of soldiers," she said. There, she met a physical therapist whom she began shadowing and volunteering at various clinics. She liked the work.

"It took me several years to go back and take the science-based pre-requisition classes to apply to PT school," Janelle Lucksavage said.

While living in Kansas due to another military transfer at the time, she applied to ECU. An interview led to an invitation to attend, and she began classes in May 2007.

She credits her husband's military service with her ability to return to school for another degree.

"Being separated is hard, but with two children, it is the only way I could have gone back to school," Janelle Lucksavage said. "I am lucky he has a steady job with such good benefits and salary or I could not have done this, even with financial aid."

She was awarded a \$1,000 merit-based Patriot Scholarship, established recently in the College of Allied Health Sciences specifically for military members or veterans, or their spouses or children. She also received a \$2,500 military-affiliated scholarship.

Her husband has enough flexibility in his job that allows him to visit Greenville twice a month and stay four or five days at a time. They are involved with their children's extracurricular activities like gymnastics, soccer and tennis, or traveling to favorite spots like Charleston or Myrtle Beach. When he is away, they talk several times a day and webcam several times a week, she said.

"When he was in Iraq, we still did webcam daily because he had Internet in his room," she said.

She has had support from her parents and her husband's parents, who have helped care for the children, especially during clinicals. Faculty and classmates also have been encouraging, hosting a baby shower this spring.

"In her case, given the task she has of raising her family and also being a student, there is little room for self, and very little room for error," Jenkins said. "Her success is a real celebration of her as a person."

While the Lucksavages will soon be merging two households into one again, she will take her board certification exams and enjoy a few months off before re-entering the workforce in 2011.

"I think she'll be able to do what she wants to do," Jenkins said. "Anyone who goes through our curriculum will, and I can put a plus, plus on that for her." ☺

*Janelle Lucksavage is the ultimate multi-tasker as mom, student and military wife.*





# Code Purple

## ECU alumna on the front line of changes in health information technology

By Crystal Baity

The latest push to convert paper medical records to electronic ones gained national attention last year when Congress appropriated an unprecedented \$30 billion for health information technology through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The law has several components aimed at accelerating the adoption of health information technology, from training workers to setting up computerized systems in physicians' offices.

On the front line of these changes is East Carolina University alumna Marlena Gibbs, who received a bachelor's degree in health information management in 2005. Gibbs is a credentialed coding professional in Pitt County Memorial Hospital's emergency department where she works on their electronic patient record and billing system, Healthspan.

Gibbs assigns standardized medical codes, which describe every type of service a health care worker may provide a patient. There are hundreds of codes to match every infection, symptom, disorder, treatment or complication, from car accidents to lung disease. Once care is given, documentation is submitted to insurance or Medicare for reimbursement and collections.

Gibbs ensures the appropriate codes are used for emergency room patients, which remain part of the

permanent health record. Because of the constantly changing health care environment, she must stay abreast of coding guidelines and reimbursement reporting requirements.

Since graduation, the versatility of Gibbs' degree and additional certification led to jobs that took her home to coastal Hyde County and back to Greenville. She is a registered health information administrator and certified gastroenterology coding specialist.

Gibbs grew up in Engelhard, where she remembers her pediatrician's office kept patient information on note cards. "It's amazing how things have changed," she said.

Improving health information technology will be extremely beneficial in the long run, Gibbs said. "The paper that you save, alone, is enough," she said. "It makes patient information more accessible and accurate."

Gibbs was drawn to the health care profession and interested to learn more about what happens behind the scenes. "Hands-on was not for me, so I have found my niche," she said.

Her first job, which she credits to her professor and mentor Dr. Susie Harris, began a week before graduation at a gastroenterology practice with nine physicians. She was involved in the installation and training of the electronic health record system for the office. "My responsibilities were endless, but offered so much diversity," she said.

Harris describes Gibbs as determined, enthusiastic and committed, both as a student and in her career. "Marlena has the characteristics to succeed in

whatever she endeavors," Harris said.

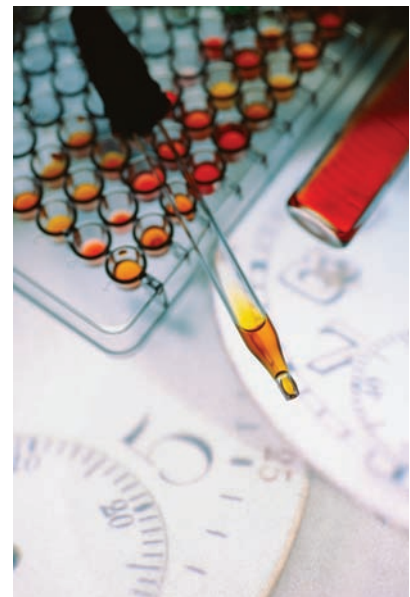
After three years, Gibbs was hired by N.C. State University as a senior health insurance information coordinator. Working in Hyde County, she recruited volunteers to help hold classes for patients on Medicare Part D in how to choose the prescription drug plan to best fit their needs. "The citizens of Hyde are underserved, and this was my opportunity to give back," she said.

After that, Gibbs became a medical record assistant in the Department of Surgery at the Brody School of Medicine, which led to her current job at PCMH. Being a credentialed coding professional is just one of many careers in the health information management field, she said.

"Every day is something new and challenging, which leads to career fulfillment on many levels," Gibbs said. "I have found that there is always room for growth and advancement."

The nationwide electronic health record will demand professionals who are cross-trained on the clinical, business and information sides of health care, Harris said.

"There will be even more opportunity for our graduates," she said. ☺



*Marlena Gibbs ('05) was drawn to the growing, behind-the-scenes field of health information management. She is a credentialed coding professional in the emergency department at Pitt County Memorial Hospital.*





**Britta Burkhardt**, a senior health information management student, received the 2009 Peggy H. Wood Scholarship. Wood began ECU's program and chaired it for 26 years. The scholarship, honoring Wood's tradition of service and excellence, is awarded annually to a deserving student who demonstrates a commitment to the health information profession.

**Ellen Crowell**, an audiology doctoral student, was awarded the 2009 Noel D. Matkin Award from the Educational Audiology Association. The \$1,800 award will be used to complete a study of speech recognition abilities in children ages 6-13.

**Sofia Filzer**, a 2009 physician assistant studies graduate, was awarded the North Carolina Coalition of Rural Health Practitioners Scholarship. Filzer received a \$500 scholarship to dedicate to providing health care in rural North Carolina.

The Department of Rehabilitation Studies had two recipients of the Elizabeth (Beth) Lambeth Memorial Scholarship: **Sarah French** and **Kenneth Pritchard**. Students must show exemplary character, leadership and

scholarship, and demonstrated enthusiasm for the rehabilitation profession.

**Stephanie Hendricks**, a second-year speech-language pathology graduate student, received the Barbara Bremer Award. The Bremer Award is given annually to graduate students in communication sciences and disorders in recognition of clinical work that has made a recognizable difference in the life of a client. Bremer, who works in private practice in Greenville, is an ECU alumna with a long-standing history of supporting students.

**David Laughlin**, a 2010 physician assistant studies graduate, is the recipient of the 2009 Bunting Scholarship. The \$1,000 scholarship is funded by Michael L. Bunting. Criteria are financial need and scholarship.

**Bridget Ledford**, a senior in the Department of Clinical Laboratory Science, **Janelle Lucksavage**, a second-year doctor of physical therapy student, and **Scott Cormier**, a second-year occupational therapy student, were chosen to receive the Patriot Scholarship. Each received \$1,000 for

the 2009-2010 academic year. The Patriot Scholarship was established in 2008 and is based on academic strength, leadership capability and the potential to contribute to the field of allied health sciences. Awardees must be a military member or veteran, or the spouse or child of a military member or veteran.

Two East Carolina University students received awards April 29, 2009, from North Carolina's Scottish Rite, which has had a 37-year partnership with ECU's Speech and Hearing Clinic. ECU students and cadets **Jeffrey McGowan**, U.S. Army, and **Danielle Daley**, U.S. Air Force, received the 2009 Scottish Rite Americanism Awards. McGowan is a Greenville native, D.H. Conley graduate and undergraduate business management major at ECU. He is the son of Ellen Finch and Charles McGowan. Daley was born in Tulsa, Okla., before moving to Raleigh about nine years ago. She also is an undergraduate business management major at ECU. She graduated from Broughton High School and is the daughter of Denise Daley.

**Kristal Mills**, an audiology doctoral student, received a Mentored Doctoral Student Research Poster Session grant from the National Institute of Health and the American Auditory Society. She will present "Vestibular Function Following Blast Exposure: A Retrospective Review" at the American Auditory Society meeting. Her mentor is Dr. Sherri Jones.

**Jessica Pierce**, an audiology doctoral student, is the first recipient of the Student Investigator Vestibular Research Grant funded by the American Academy of Audiology Foundation in partnership with the American Institute of Balance Education Foundation. The grant, valued at \$4,605, was awarded for her project "Morphological Correlates of Gravity Receptor Functional Aging." Her mentor is Dr. Sherri Jones. Pierce also received second place for her presentation at the 11th annual ECU



Neuroscience Symposium on Nov. 3.

**Erika Stewart**, a senior health information management student, received a \$1,200 American Health Information Management Association Foundation Undergraduate Merit Scholarship. The award is funded through contributions to the general scholarship fund named for Grace Whiting Myers. Stewart also received the North Carolina Health Information Management Association Scholarship valued at \$1,000. The merit scholarship is given each spring to outstanding rising seniors pursuing degrees in health information administration and health information technology.

**Kun Yu**, a second-year communication sciences and disorders student, received the Gravely Foundation Scholarship valued at \$500. The scholarship is awarded on the basis of academic excellence, financial need and qualities of good citizenship within the university and contribution or dedication to the enhancement of the professional major. ☺



*At right, a student uses her mortarboard during commencement exercises May 7 to remember Meta Downes, a beloved faculty member.*

## In Memorial



*Meta Downes*

**Meta Downes**, who mentored hundreds of speech language pathologists, died Feb. 24 after a courageous battle with cancer. She was 73.

Downes was an associate professor of speech-language pathology in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders for 36 years.

She graduated as valedictorian of her 1958 class at Bethany College, before earning a master's degree in French from Middlebury College and the University of Paris Sorbonne as a Fulbright Scholar in 1959.

The same year she married Sheldon Downes, professor emeritus of rehabilitation studies at ECU. They raised their family in Morgantown, W.Va., and State College, Pa., before settling in Greenville in 1967.

Meta Downes was a teacher her whole life, teaching high school French and Spanish, and college French at West Virginia University, Penn State University and ECU.

She earned a master's of education and a master's in speech pathology and audiology from ECU. Her work with students garnered many awards from ECU, the North Carolina Speech-

Hearing-Language Association, the National Student Speech-Language-Hearing Association and the American Speech-Hearing-Language Association. She received the Outstanding Alumni Achievement Award from Bethany College in 2005.

Downes sang in church choirs for 55 years including 37 years with First Presbyterian Church in Greenville. She was a Marine wife and mother. The Downes celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 2009.

She is survived by her husband, Sheldon Downes of Greenville; her son, Eric Downes and wife, Kim, of New Market, Md.; daughters, Karen, of Winston Salem, and Sonja Ellington and husband, Greg, of Burlington; and grandchildren Kathryn Downes, Ryan Downes and Kirsten Ellington.

An endowed scholarship in communication sciences and disorders is being created in her memory. Tax-deductible contributions can be made to the ECU Medical & Health Sciences Foundation, 525 Moye Blvd., Greenville, N.C., 27834. Designate "Meta Downes Endowed Scholarship" in the memo line, or contact Dr. Gregg Givens, chairman, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, 252-744-6100 or [givensg@ecu.edu](mailto:givensg@ecu.edu). ☺







*Left to right, communication sciences and disorders students Courtney Durham, Jessica Melito, Katie Maloney, Melissa Joseph, Sarah Williamson, Kim Powell, Angela Gianetto and Kristin Markel and the ECU Chapter of the National Student Speech Language and Hearing Association in Communication Sciences and Disorders raised \$2,649 for ECU's Relay for Life on April 9 in memory of longtime faculty member Meta Downes.*

## 1980

**Susan Lillard Thomason** (BS health information management) of Chapel Hill was recently promoted to vice president of global commercial partnering and solutions for Quintiles Transnational Corporation in Research Triangle Park. She has worked in clinical and commercial global strategic partnering, business development, pharmaceutical consulting, project management and data management. She is a founding member of the Quintiles NovaQuest investment partnering group, a division formed to develop strategic partnerships and alliances with biopharmaceutical clients. She previously held management positions at UNC Hospitals and Medical Review Inc.

## 1992

**Sherry Nicholson King** (BS health information management) has been elected president of the North Carolina Health Information Management Association, which promotes quality, access and security of patient health information. She lives in Raleigh with her husband, Tony, and their two children.

## 1994

**Tamara Tetterton Flynn** (BS health information management) is director of client services for Transcend Services, based in Atlanta which provides medical language specialists to more than 250 hospitals and health systems. She lives in Bethel.

## 1995

**Stacie Caswell** (BS occupational therapy) appeared on the cover of the Journal of Hand Therapy (April/June 2008 issue), the official journal of the American Society of Hand Therapists. Caswell, a U.S. Army officer, was serving in Iraq when the photo was taken of her helping an Iraqi citizen.

## 1998

**Vickie Herrin Smith** (BS health information management) is recovery audit contractor coordinator for Stanly Regional Medical Center. She lives in Locust with her husband, Jared, a 1998 alumnus, and two daughters, Sarah, 10, and Lauren, 7.

## 2002

**Melissa Weiss Chappell** (BS health information services) is health information manager, privacy officer and compliance officer at Chowan Hospital in Edenton and Bertie Memorial Hospital in Windsor. She and her husband, Quintin, live in Edenton with their children, Caleb, 5, and Chloe, 2.

## 2003

**Kris-Shae McCall** (BS health information management) received a master's degree in health administration from Pfeiffer University in August. She is assistant manager at Caromont Health, where she is responsible for coding and transcription services.

**Kevin Morrow** (BS health information management) is education division manager with LexiCode Corporation in Columbia, S.C., where he has worked seven years. He recently attained certification as an AHIMA-approved ICD-10-CM/PCS Trainer, and passed the CCS-P exam in March.

## 2004

**Amber Rouse Johnson** (BS health information management) is pursuing a master's of business administration degree at ECU. She is billing manager for Brody School of Medicine's departments of family medicine and physical medicine and rehabilitation. She and her husband, Chris, welcomed their first child, Madison, in November 2008.

## 2005

**Julie Rountree Bain** (BS health information management) is director of health information management at Halifax Regional Medical Center in Roanoke Rapids. She lives in Jackson with her husband and their son, who was born Jan. 4.

**Emmanuel Yennyemb** (BS health information management) of Greenville is a traveling consultant and project

manager for electronic health record implementation. He completed his MBA with specialization in information technology in 2008 and is working on a doctoral degree. He will receive systems application and product certification in August.

## 2006

**Cheryl Harris Wigley** (BS occupational therapy) works at Child and Family Development in Charlotte. She previously worked in private practice and pediatric home health with a focus on sensory processing disorder and handwriting difficulties. Wigley created and operated her first handwriting camp last summer. She lives in Matthews with her husband, Kyle.

**Kenneth Jason Berry** (BS health services management) is practice manager at Beaufort Regional Health Systems.

## 2007

**Kourtney Elise Thompson** (BS health information management) is a research clinical specialist with Pharmaceutical Product Development, a contract research organization based in Wilmington. She works with the National Institutes of Health in the Division of Microbiology and Infectious Diseases to ensure all guidelines specified by the NIH and the Food and Drug Administration are followed. PPD manages 400 infectious disease protocols and more than 2,000 sites around the world. She plans to enroll in a master's degree program in clinical research at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

## 2008

**Hannah Jackson** (BS health information management, BS health services management) of Raleigh has been promoted to legal specialist and supervisor of the release unit in health information management at Duke University Health Systems. She will

# In Memoriam



*Kathy Arnold Taft*

**Kathy Arnold Taft**, a graduate of the community health program, died March 9. She was 62.

Taft was the longest serving member on the North Carolina State Board of Education. She spent many years as public health educator in Raleigh and Greenville. In 1981, she graduated cum laude from ECU with a bachelor's of science degree. In 1995, Taft was appointed by then Gov. Jim Hunt to the state board of education.

Before the appointment, Taft was vice chairwoman of the Pitt County Board of Education. She was a founding member of the Pitt County Communities in Schools. She served on the board of the Governor's Schools of North Carolina from 1986 until 1992. She was a guardian ad litem volunteer, member of the ECU Women's Roundtable, an ECU Educator's Hall of Fame inductee, and was recently honored by the Order of the Cupola at ECU.

Taft is survived by her children, Jessica Perry Gorall and husband, Dwight, Paige Pressly Fuqua and husband, Chris, Thomas Fleming Taft Jr. and Jonathan Gudmund Taft. She has five grandsons, Ryan Taylor Gorall, Benjamin Warren Gorall, Christopher Gaines Fuqua Jr., Joseph Hoyt Fuqua and Nicholas Wilder Fuqua. She is also survived by her sister, Dina Arnold Holton; her brother, Jesse Hoyt Arnold III; and several nieces and nephews.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Kathy A. Taft Scholarship for a female undergraduate in education leadership in the College of Education, East Carolina University Foundation Inc., Greenville Centre, Suite 1100, 2200 South Charles Blvd., Mail Stop 301, Greenville, N.C., 27858-4353, and the Kathy A. Taft Scholarship for a female undergraduate in Education Policy, UNC School of Education Foundation, CB# 3500 Peabody Hall, Chapel Hill, N.C., 27599. ☺

work alongside legal counsel as the health information management legal specialist. She will begin work on a master's degree in health informatics this fall.

**Tameika Reese** (BS health information management, BS health services management) of Greenville is a health information technician at Pitt County Memorial Hospital, where she has worked for more than six years. She is pursuing a master's degree in health administration and will graduate in 2011.

## 2009

**Mary Lynn Sanderson** (BS health services management) is the pediatric oncology research data manager in the Brody School of Medicine pediatric hematology/oncology department. ☺





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*At far right, occupational therapy students study a person's ability to feel, touch or lift objects following a stroke or traumatic brain injury in the motion analysis lab. At right, faculty member Larry Dennis took this nighttime photo of the Health Sciences Building. Large versions are for sale as part of a physician assistant studies fundraiser.*

# Allied Health Sciences welcomes three new faculty

The College of Allied Health Sciences announces the following additions:

**Sonja K. Bareiss**, assistant professor in the Department of Physical Therapy, received a bachelor's degree in biology and a master's degree in physical therapy from Rockhurst University. She practiced physical therapy for several years before earning a doctorate in



*Sonja K. Bareiss*

biology at East Carolina University. She then joined the faculty of the Department of Anatomy and Cell



*Jennifer Forbes*

Biology where she taught gross anatomy to allied health professionals. Her research and clinical interests include understanding mechanisms

involved in the development and recovery from chronic pain.

**Jennifer Forbes**, clinical assistant professor in the Department of

Physician Assistant Studies, received a bachelor's degree in biology with a minor in chemistry and a master's degree in physician assistant studies from the University of South Alabama.



*Kelly P. James*

Forbes has clinical experience in orthopedics, pediatrics, emergency medicine and family medicine. Her husband is a member of the U.S. Coast Guard and they have lived in many different areas of the country. They are the parents of a 4-year-old daughter.

**Kelly P. James**, clinical supervisor in the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, received a bachelor's degree in communication sciences and disorders from ECU and a master's in communication sciences and disorders from Appalachian State University. She has 15 years of clinical experience in several settings including schools, acute care, inpatient rehabilitation and long term care. Her clinical interests include augmentative and alternative communication, and communication disorders in children. ♻️









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We look forward to  
hearing your news!